

null
Diana T Fritz 02/20/2007 04:56:37 PM From DB/Inbox: Diana T Fritz

Cable
Text:

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 00218

SIPDIS
CXABU:

ACTION: PAO
INFO: P/M USLO ECON POL AMB DCM DAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB: MSISON
DRAFTED: PAO: WROBERTSON
CLEARED: DCM: MQINN; POL: BTHOMSON; CG: PSUTPHIN

VZCZCADI306
RR RUEHC RUEHZM RUEHGB RHMFIUU RUEKJCS RHEHNSC
RUEKJCS RUEAHQA
DE RUEHAD #0218 0421335
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 111335Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8251
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0302
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEAHQA/OSAF WASHDC

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 000218

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/I, NEA/RA, and NEA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: MUSIC VIDEO ON SUFFERING OF IRAQI NATION -- WITH LYRICS
ATTRIBUTED TO DUBAI RULER

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A music video on the suffering of the Iraqi nation with lyrics attributed to Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum (MbR), the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, is currently making the rounds in the Middle East. The video, implicitly critical of U.S. policy, likens American soldiers to the Mongols who invaded Baghdad in 1258, but conveys a concluding message that expresses hope for the future of Iraq. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) An Iraq-themed music video entitled "The Shepherds and the Fire" is currently making the rounds in the Middle East. The video first appeared approximately two weeks ago and is regularly featured on several Dubai-based Arabic language satellite channels. What makes this video unusual is the fact that the lyrics are widely attributed to the Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The lyrics are sung by Kazem Al-Saher, an Iraqi singer who is currently one of the Arab world's most popular artists. The video was produced in Dubai and lasts over eight minutes.

¶3. (SBU) The lyrics and imagery of the video portray several primary themes. The video opens with the pages of a book in flames. The book seems to represent the theme of Iraqi "history" -- pervasive throughout the video. It shows Iraq in antiquity and what appear to be Mongol invaders attacking ancient Baghdad. It later shifts to brief clips of U.S. soldiers kicking in doors of houses and searching buildings. It also shows Iraqi children playing soccer and then running away from approaching U.S. troops. Sample lyrics include: "History has taught those who read it that oppression cannot last long." "History has taught that strong countries have previously invaded and failed." "No victory against Iraqis inside Iraq is possible."

¶4. (SBU) It is important to point out that brief segments of the video show bombs being prepared and suicide bombers donning explosive vests. While those watching the video may get the impression that the video gives tacit approval to "resistance" operations in Iraq, the lyrics during these scenes proclaim "Victory is impossible as long as destruction continues" and proceed to depict scenes of destruction in Iraq. The video does not condone the violence in Iraq, nor does applauding the insurgency appear to be its intent. Its main orientation seems to be to place the crisis in Iraq in a kind of historical -- this too shall pass -- perspective.

¶5. (SBU) The last theme is that of an Iraqi woman languishing in an Abu Ghraib-like prison, suffering abuse and harsh treatment from a uniformed female (apparently U.S. military) guard. The anguished Iraqi woman appears to represent Iraq as a whole. She is finally freed from her suffering and, running across a stretch of sand, finds an Iraqi flag buried in the sand. Sample lyrics: "We were attacked without any evidence." "There is no justification for those with ambition in Iraq." "For every oppressor there is an end." The video concludes with the Iraqi flag raised rippling in the air.

¶6. (SBU) While the video is strongly critical of the U.S., implicitly comparing U.S. soldiers to Mongol invaders, it seems to be calling for an end to violence, holding out a positive message for the future of Iraq. As a whole the video seems to say that history shows that Iraq has been invaded before, but that the current anguish in the country will eventually pass and that in the end a free and victorious Iraq will emerge.

¶7. (SBU) Post has a pending request to meet with MBR on another issue and will query him as to the attribution of the lyrics and the intent of the video.

SISON